



DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

BOBBY JINDAL

GOVERNOR

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SECRETARY

For Immediate Release:

May 1, 2008

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Governor proclaims May as Clean Air Month

BATON ROUGE – Gov. Bobby Jindal has declared May as Clean Air Month in Louisiana. May is traditionally the start of ozone season and the proclamation was made to encourage citizens to become familiar with the Air Quality Index, to understand what causes ozone formation and to take voluntary steps to help prevent the formation and improve air quality.

While air quality in the state is increasingly better, on March 12, the Environmental Protection Agency lowered the ozone standard. The new standard will potentially put 26 parishes in the state out of attainment. The lower standard will result in more Ozone Action Days being called.

“We are actively working with all regions in the state to mitigate the impact of the new federal air quality standard,” said DEQ Assistant Secretary Louis Buatt. “We are forming a statewide ozone steering committee, consisting of state, federal and local agencies and governments, citizens and environmental groups, industry, trade groups and community organizations. This grass roots effort will address steps to reduce the impact of the new standard. We all contribute to the problem and we all need to work for a solution.”

When conditions are right, the air pollutant known as ozone is formed. Ozone is a prime ingredient in smog and is detrimental to air quality. It is formed by a chemical reaction on hot days when the pollutants, known as nitrogen oxides and volatile organic compounds, cook under a hot sun. Ozone formation is most prevalent between May 1 and Sept. 30 but it can occur at other times.

When everyone takes necessary steps to limit the formation of ozone-causing pollutants, there is a chance the ozone threat may pass. Some steps the public can take include: carpooling, using mass transit and ride sharing, using gasoline powered engines, such as lawn equipment, after 6 p.m., limit driving and combining errands, conserving energy and fueling after 6p.m.

The Air Quality Index is available on the DEQ web site, www.deq.louisiana.gov. For information or air quality questions, please call 225-219-3489.